

FISH & WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: July 10, 2014

Agenda Item: Exotic Wildlife Classification for Importation/Possession

Division: Enforcement

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 20 minutes

Background

To be legally imported into Montana, exotic wildlife must be classified. A review committee evaluates petitions for such classifications. The committee—which includes FWP, the Montana Departments of Livestock, Agriculture, and Public Health and Human Services, a representative of the exotic pet trade, and a citizen with an interest in fish and wildlife makes recommendations to the Commission to classify exotic wildlife either as noncontrolled, controlled, or prohibited. Recommendations are based on:

- A. The environmental impacts caused by the animal if it is released or escapes from captivity, including ecological and economic impacts;
- B. The risk the animal would pose to health or safety of the public, wildlife or agriculture; and
- C. The ability to readily control and contain the animal in captivity.

In April, The Commission proposed rules based on the Classification Review Committee's recommendation to classify several species.

Public Involvement Process & Results

Public comment began on April 25. A total of 72 comments were received on the proposed rule changes. A majority of those comments opposed classifying the *Coturnix* quail due to their inability to survive in the wild in Montana and the diseases that they may carry are already in the state. A public hearing was also conducted on May 21 at FWP Headquarters in Helena. No participants were present and no comments were received.

Alternatives and Analysis

The Commission can decide not to adopt the proposed rule language in whole or part.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

The Classification Review Committee recommends that the F&W Commission adopt the amendments to the rule as proposed with the exception of the *Coturnix* or "Old World" quail.

FWP recommends that the Commission not adopt the classification of the *Coturnix* or "Old World" quail as proposed. Public comment indicated that *Coturnix* do not pose an immediate threat to Montana's native fish and wildlife, its habitats, the human health and safety environment, and does not require any special needed control measures.

Proposed Motion

I move that the Commission adopt amendments to the classification of exotic species Administrative Rules of Montana as proposed with the exception of the classification change of the *Coturnix* or "Old World" quail.